DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 192 EC 305 506

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TITLE The Ecology of Human Performance Framework: A Model for Identifying and Designing Appropriate Accommodations for Adult Learners.
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 21p.; In: Symposium on Accommodating Adults with Disabilities in Adult Education Pograms. Proceedings of the NAASLN [National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs] (6th, New Orleans, LA, September 26-28, 1996); see EC 305 503.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Adult Learning; *Disabilities; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Interprofessional Relationship; *Intervention; Models; *Occupational Therapy; Opinions

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a model framework, The Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) framework, for organizing adult basic education to utilize the skills of occupational therapists. The paper also includes two responses to the proposed framework by Janet S. Stotts and Cheryl Keenan. Reasons for the inclusion of occupational therapy in adult education programs are offered, including the field's expertise in identifying factors that facilitate or create barriers to performance and in the adjustments that can be made to support individual needs. The EHP framework offers five strategies for addressing individual needs: (1) establish/restore the person's ability to perform in context; (2) modify/adapt contextual features and task demands to support performance in context; (3) alter the context to better match the individual's abilities; (4) prevent problems by anticipating difficulties; and (5) create circumstances that promote more typical or complex performances in context. Definitions are provided of major terms in the EHP framework, which is also schematically illustrated. The first response to the proposed model, by Janet Stotts, points out advantages of the EHP framework, notes differences between educators and therapists, and criticizes the model for focusing on deficits rather than strengths and on volunteer clients who understand the disability and seek assistance. The second response, by Cheryl Keenan, suggests translating the EHP model into a series of intervention types appropriate for basic education of adults with disabilities. (DB)

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THE ECOLOGY OF HUMAN PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK: A MODEL FOR IDENTIFYING AND DESIGNING APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

By Winnie Dunn
Mary Pat Gilbert
Kathy Parker

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Adult educators face many challenges as they serve individuals in their community programs. Many consumers in adult education programs have unique learning needs, but as professionals have become familiar with the learning characteristics of persons with specific disabilities, the challenges have taken on new features. For example, adult educators must now understand how to respond to inquiries and requests to accommodate learning tasks and environments so that consumers can participate successfully. Even though many adult educators have made accommodations and adaptations for learning throughout their programs, with the focus on disabilities, there is an increasing need to know how to organize these strategies so that they can be applied at the right time for the right needs.

Although it is always possible to develop one's own framework for thinking about a problem, it is also useful to solicit knowledge and expertise of other disciplines which may have addressed aspects of the problem already. It has been uncommon for adult educators to work with occupational therapists, but occupational therapy has knowledge and expertise to support all types of accommodations. With an emphasis on identifying and designing the best ways to support persons to conduct their daily lives, occupational therapists can collaborate with adult educators to address the learning issues in adult education programs. This paper offers a framework (i.e., the Ecology of Human Performance) for organizing adult education knowledge to make it useful for the accommodations that are necessary to support the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Why Would Occupational Therapists be Involved in Adult Basic Education?

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The first issue that must be addressed in this discussion is: "Why would occupational therapists be involved (or interested) in adult basic education?" There are four primary reasons why occupational therapists are good partners for adult educators. First, occupational therapists are concerned with enabling persons to live satisfying lives. This overarching philosophy provides a mechanism for examining the issues that face persons each day, which is also a primary focus for adult educators as they become involved in the persons' lives.

Second, occupational therapists have expertise in identifying the factors that facilitate or create barriers to performance. Occupational therapists consider task, knowledge and skills, and environmental issues as they try to

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discover what helps persons to be successful, and what might be getting in the way of persons completing necessary or desired tasks and meeting their goals. Task issues include performance of the daily life tasks themselves (i.e., self care, work, play/leisure). Knowledge and skill issues refer to the components of task performance (i.e., sensorimotor, cognitive, psychosocial features of performance); these components are part of the person's repertoire. Environmental issues refer to the contexts for performance (i.e., physical, social, cultural, temporal aspects of a person's environment); we must not only consider the person's ability to perform tasks, but also where tasks are performed because the context can make it easier or harder to do things.

Third, occupational therapists have expertise in the transactions among persons, tasks and contexts and how this transaction can be adjusted to support what the person wants or needs to do. Therefore, this is an important discipline to contribute to the process of designing accommodations for persons who have various learning and performance needs.

Finally, more than one-third of all occupational therapy personnel work in public education settings as their primary employment. Because of this trend, occupational therapists are knowledgeable about educational service models and recognize how to serve persons' needs in education frameworks.

What is the Ecology of Human Performance Framework?

The Ecology of Human Performance is a framework for considering the relationships among persons (i.e., their skills, abilities and experiences), what persons want and need to do (i.e., their desired task performance) and where they need to conduct their daily lives (i.e., the contexts for desired performance) (see Figures 1 and 2). Persons and their contexts are unique and dynamic. It is impossible to understand the person without also understanding the person's context (i.e., persons are imbedded in their contexts). Persons influence contexts and contexts influence persons as task performance occurs.

A person who wishes to read the menu at a restaurant when out with friends may need different strategies and accommodations to be successful than a person who wishes to read a letter from a family member while at home in the evening. In the restaurant, there are cues in the environment (e.g., other persons talking about the menu, pictures, people eating something of interest at a nearby table). At home, the person may need to read less familiar words without other cues about the letter content.

The range of a person's performance is determined by considering the person's skills, abilities and experiences and the context within which the person must conduct daily life. A person's performance range can be enhanced or limited by the person's skills and by the context (see Figures 4 and 5).

A person wishes to log activities for his construction work. If he has typing skills, but a poor ability to write with a pencil, and has no computer at the construction site, his performance range will be limited, because the context does not support his desired task performance, even though he has a skill that could (i.e., typing ability).

The EHP offers a comprehensive framework for designing strategies to support a person's performance. The EHP framework enables professionals to consider not only the skills the person might be able to develop, but also the skills the person already has and ways to change tasks and contexts to facilitate successful performance. The EHP does not presume that the person bears the total responsibility to be fixed. Rather, the focus is on the transaction between the person's skills and the resources of the context; any aspect that can be addressed to enable better and more satisfying performance is a viable strategy.

The EHP framework offers five strategies for addressing persons' needs (see Figure 6). The **Establish/Restore** strategy addresses a person's ability to perform in context. When the adult educator knows about a person's individual strengths and needs (e.g., poor memory, good attention), strategies can be designed to take advantage of strengths while working on performance skills that are weak and are keeping the person from achieving desired outcomes.

The **Modify/Adapt** strategies address contextual features and task demands so they support the person's performance in context. These strategies acknowledge what the person's strengths and needs are and build around them, so that the weak areas do not interfere with performance. For example, if a person has a poor memory, the provider might suggest using "post-it notes" in books, cue words on the cabinets and refrigerator, or a desk arrangement that reminds the person of important information or tasks. These strategies don't fix the memory problem, but rather keep the memory problem from interfering with performance.

The **Alter** strategies address the possible need to find an optimal context for the person. This means that the professional and the person acknowledge both the person's skills and needs, and the natural features of various contexts, then search to find the best possible match between the two (i.e., without changing the person's skills or the demands/ characteristics of the context). If a person is very distractible visually, one might find a grocery store that will deliver groceries from a list. We would not ask the person to get "less distractible," nor would we ask the grocery store to change its procedures. However, the result would be a better performance outcome.

The **Prevent** strategies address our ability to anticipate a problem in the future. When using this strategy, it is important to remember that the problem does not currently exist, but is likely to occur in the future if no

changes are made in the current pattern of living. We don't have to wait for a person to face failure before offering a strategy for making a situation better. For example, if we anticipate that a person would have difficulty in a larger social situation, we could design a plan for the person to have a more familiar person closely available to support interaction rather than waiting for an embarrassing situation to occur and then "fixing" it.

The **Create** strategies address circumstances that promote more typical or complex performance in context. We select these strategies when it would be useful to apply our professional expertise in situations that all persons experience. The focus of these strategies is not on disabilities, but rather the use of one's knowledge and expertise to solve a community problem. For example, occupational therapists might collaborate with a company to design a workplace that is easier for everyone to use (e.g., adjustable tables and chairs), or work with a community to design a playground that stimulates optimal exploration by every child, not just children who have disabilities. These strategies might be used less in current adult education programs.

How Can EHP be Useful in Adult Basic Education Programs?

The EHP framework and adult basic education have complementary philosophies. First, the EHP framework is a model for identifying needs and designing strategies to support more functional performance in daily life; adult basic education programs share the focus of supporting persons' functional abilities. Second, the EHP framework embraces both person and context strengths as critical resources for addressing performance needs; in adult basic education programs the educators identify and take full advantage of the person's adaptive strategies as clues for future successes in learning. Third, in the EHP framework, the person's specific diagnosis or disability category is not relevant to planning strategies with the person--the focus is on *what* the person wants and needs to do; in adult basic education the educator and the person work together to identify strengths and barriers to learning separate from known or unknown disability categories.

The EHP framework can help adult basic educators make systematic decisions about identifying needs and designing strategies that match those needs. The EHP offers adult basic educators a broad-focused and systematic method for planning accommodations to support the person's performance. The EHP provides a mechanism for making decisions about persons' goals and skills, tasks they wish to perform, and for considering the contextual supports and barriers to successful performance. The EHP also enables adult educators to organize their knowledge and expertise in order to make decisions about which accommodation strategies would be the best match for the person (i.e., establish/restore, modify/adapt, alter, prevent, or create).

How can OT's Provide Support for the Accommodation Process in Adult Basic Education?

Occupational therapists and adult basic educators are excellent partners when serving persons who have learning needs. The adult basic educator contributes expertise in skill development in the content area(s) of interest to the person being served. The occupational therapist contributes expertise about the relationships between the desired performance and possible task or context adaptations that can better support successful performance. With these areas of expertise, both are interested in better functional abilities, both consider the person's strengths and contextual supports as contributors to a successful outcome, and both focus on performance needs rather than labels. With this partnership, consumers in adult education programs have access to wonderful opportunities to have successful and satisfying lives.

ECOLOGY OF HUMAN PERFORMANCE (EHP) DEFINITIONS

Person: An individual with a unique configuration of abilities, experiences, and sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial skills.

A. Persons are unique and complex and therefore precise predictability about their performance is impossible.
B. The meaning a person attaches to task and contextual variables strongly influences performance.

Task: An objective set of behaviors necessary to accomplish a goal.

A. An infinite variety of tasks exists around every person.
B. Constellations of tasks form a person's roles.

Performance: Performance is both the process and the result of the person interacting with context to engage in tasks.

A. The performance range is determined by the interaction between the person and the context.
B. Performance in natural contexts is different than performance in contrived contexts (ecological validity, Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Context: The AOTA Uniform Terminology (3rd ed.) definition for context is as follows:

Temporal Aspects (Note: Although temporal aspects are determined by the person, they become contextual due to the social and cultural meaning attached to the temporal features):

1. Chronological: Individual's age.
2. Developmental: Stage of phase of maturation.
3. Life Cycle: Place in important life phases, such as career cycle, parenting cycle, educational process.
4. Health Status: Place in continuum of disability, such as acuteness of injury, continuum of disability, or terminal nature of illness.

Environment:

1. Physical: Non-human aspects of context (includes the natural terrain, buildings, furniture, objects, tools, and devices).
2. Social: Availability and expectations of significant individuals, such as spouses, friends, and caregivers (also includes larger social groups which are influential in establishing norms, role expectations, and social routines).
3. Cultural: Customs, beliefs, activity patterns, behavior standards, and expectations accepted by the society of which the individual is a member (includes political aspects such as laws, which shape access to resources and affirm personal rights; also includes opportunities for education, employment, and economic support).

Therapeutic Intervention: Therapeutic intervention is a collaboration between the person/family and the occupational therapist, directed at meeting performance needs.

Therapeutic interventions in occupational therapy are multifaceted and can be designed to accomplish one or all of the following.

Establish/Restore a person's ability to perform in context.

Therapeutic intervention can establish or restore a person's abilities to perform in context. This emphasis is on identifying the person's skills and barriers to performance, and designing interventions that improve the person's skills or experiences.

Adapt contextual features and task demands so they support performance in context.

Therapeutic interventions can adapt contextual features and task demands so they are more supportive of the person's performance. In his intervention, the therapist changes aspects of context and tasks so performance is more possible. This can include enhancing some features to provide cues or reducing other features to reduce distractibility.

Alter the actual context in which people perform.

Therapeutic interventions can alter the context within which the person performs. This intervention emphasizes selecting a context that enables the person to perform with current skills and abilities. This can include placing the person in a different setting that more closely matches current skills and abilities, rather than changing the present setting to accommodate needs.

Prevent the occurrence or evolution of maladaptive performance in context.

Therapeutic interventions can prevent the occurrence or evolution of barriers to performance in context. Sometimes therapists can anticipate that certain negative outcomes are likely without interventions to change the course of events. Therapists can create interventions to change the course of events. Therapists can create interventions that address person, context, and task variables to change the course, thus enabling functional performance to emerge.

Create circumstances that promote more adaptable/complex performance in context.

Therapeutic interventions can create circumstances that promote more adaptable performance in context. This therapeutic intervention does not assume a disability is present or has the potential to interfere with performance. This therapeutic choice focuses on providing enriched contextual and task experiences that will enhance performance.

Figure 1

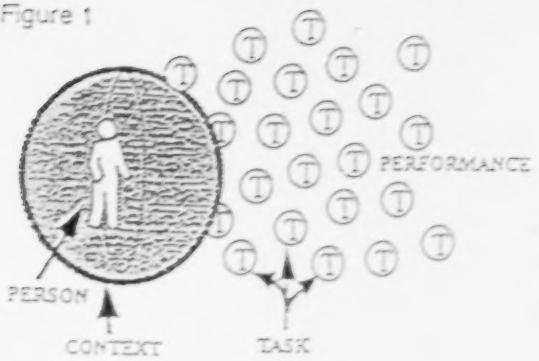

Figure 2

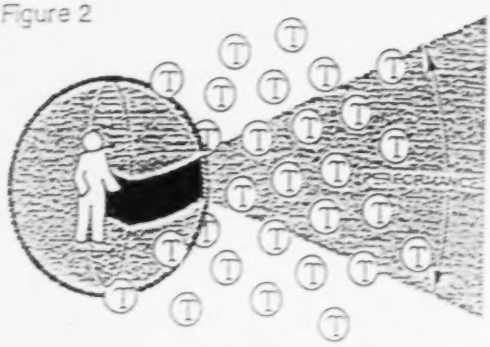

Figure 3

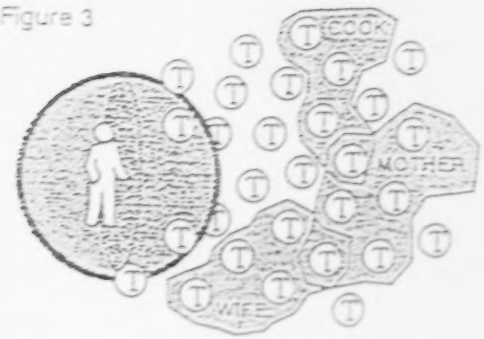

Figure 4

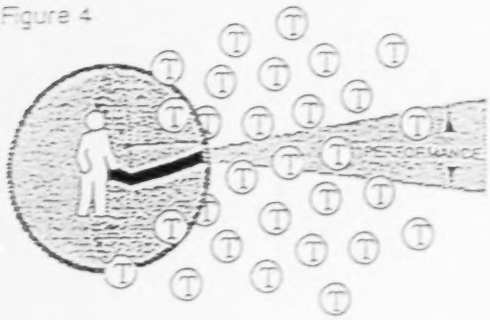

Figure 5

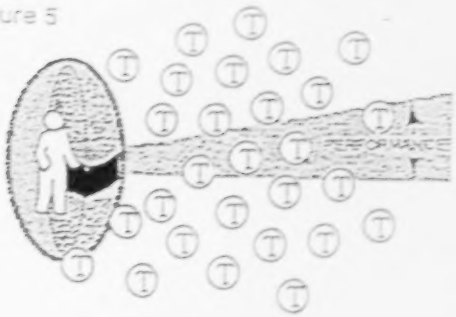

Figure 6

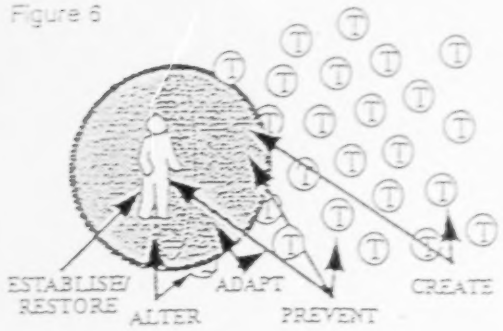

Figure 1: Schemata for the Ecology of Human Performance framework. Persons are imbedded in their contexts. An infinite variety of tasks exists around every person. Performance occurs as a result of the person interacting with context to engage in tasks.

Figure 2: Schemata of a typical person within the Ecology of Human Performance framework. Persons use their skills and abilities to 'look through' the context at the tasks they need or want to do. Person derive meaning from this process. Performance range is the configuration of tasks that persons execute.

Figure 3: Illustration of Roles in the Ecology of Human Performance framework. Life roles are a constellation of tasks. Persons have many roles; some tasks fall into more than one role. These role configurations are unique for each person.

Figure 4: Schemata of a person with limited skills and abilities within the Ecology of Human Performance framework. Although context is still useful, the person has less skills and abilities to 'look through' context and derive meaning. This limits the person's range.

Figure 5: Schemata of limited context within the Ecology of Human Performance framework. The person has adequate skills and abilities, but the context does not provide resources needed to perform. In this situation, performance range is limited.

Figure 6: Illustration of Therapeutic Interventions within the Ecology of Human Performance framework. The arrows indicate the variables that are effected by each intervention.

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ECOLOGY OF HUMAN PERFORMANCE MODEL

Response by Janet S. Stotts

Advantages to using EHP in Adult Education

I agree with the authors when they say that it is too early to tell if there are going to be any advantages to using this model. Although the new introduction that was added states that "the model is prescriptive as well, providing a logical process for determining and selecting interventions to help an individual function in an environment," the original closing section states that "scholars will therefore need to refine these constructs by assessing their adequacy and answering practice-oriented questions." It goes on to say: "A primary question is: 'How do we capture contextual features objectively, and how do we then decide which features are salient for particular performance situations?'" They go on to decry the "tendency to take ideas created through professional dialogue in the literature and regard them as certainty..."

I believe that their original conclusion is correct and that while there are some interesting ideas in this piece that can be fleshed out by further study, this is by no means ready to adopt for practice in occupational therapy; and even less so, to translate into another field. The ideas that are most interesting are the emphasis on considering a person's environment when planning any type of intervention and the five types of interventions that are delineated.

The idea that a person's environment is important to his or her educational planning, regardless of whether the person has a disability, is certainly not a new one to most adult educators. Indeed, it is the foundation of one of the most successful programs in adult education, family literacy. However, the relative newness of an idea is not a reliable measure of its utility, so it is never amiss to remind adult educators of the importance of a student's environment in his or her educational planning.

The five categories of accommodations are also a helpful concept. They can remind adult educators of all the possibilities that should be considered before instruction or testing can begin. However, there are a number of things that must happen before students and educators get to this point. They are covered in the next section.

Challenges Regarding the Use of EHP in Adult Education: The Differences Between Educators and Therapists

Occupational therapists and adult educators have different degrees of preparation to work with adults who have disabilities. Therapists are specifically trained to work with disabilities in both adults and children. As far as I know, there is no college or university in Kansas, and few enough in

other states, that offer courses in adult basic education for adults with disabilities. Even certified teachers only have a class in "The Exceptional Child" unless they have Special Education certification. And even then, the course work references the K-12 educational system, not working with adults.

This lack of the theoretical background necessary to inform choices regarding curricular interventions combined with a lack of experience working with adults with disabilities is one of the biggest challenges adult educators face, regardless of the model chosen to assist them. This makes it even more imperative that whomever is drawing up the model not make any assumptions about the knowledge base of those who will be implementing the model.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was a huge unfunded mandate for the field of adult basic education. Programs that only have the necessary funding to serve 3% or less of their target population were challenged to expand their service to an expensive population. While a few adult education state offices have managed to get their state's special education funding to apply to their clients in adult education who are 21 or younger, for the vast majority of adult education students, there are no sources of funding to cover the expense of hiring additional adult basic education staff and no sources of funding for any of the interventions.

Occupational therapists usually work full-time with the accompanying perks and responsibilities. Adult educators often work part-time, from as few as three to as many as thirty hours a week, usually without benefits. It is a lucky adult educator that gets paid for even one hour of preparation time. Any extra time spent with students who need special attention is usually unpaid time. While many interventions can be done at little or no expense, the biggest challenge is paying the salary of whoever it is that reviews the student's assessments, decides on the appropriate interventions, and then takes the time to implement them.

The whole area of assessment is a major challenge for adults, especially those with learning disabilities. The authors presume that adult educators, like therapists, know what the "skills and abilities" of the adults with disabilities who enter their programs are and how those disabilities affect their students' education and their lives. They also presume that the adults know what their disabilities are and what their needs are. This is seldom the case when serving undereducated adults, especially those with learning disabilities. A primary challenge of educators is to find the necessary funding for adult assessment and a professional who is experienced in assessing adults. They also need to be able to interpret the results of the assessment in terms that students can understand and accept. If student needs are not known, it is impossible to correctly fulfill those needs regardless of which model of therapeutic intervention is used.

Ecology of Human Performance Model is a Deficit-Based Model, Not a Strengths-Based Model

The EHP model focuses on what the person cannot do and how to either establish or restore the person's abilities or change either the task or the environment to make up for that person's supposed "deficiencies." I would suggest that the first set of terms, "establish or restore," both of which imply an absence of an ability, be changed to "enhance" which implies furthering an ability that already exists.

According to the authors, some interventions "...are common options chosen by therapists, particularly within the medical model, which considers what is wrong with the person and sets a plan to correct the problem." On the other hand, good educational planning looks at a student's strengths in all facets of his environment and uses those strengths as the starting point for any activities or interventions. The challenge for adult education in this situation is the same as those mentioned above: how to afford the assessments that will identify a student's strengths and how to pay for the time of the person who plans the individual educational program based on those strengths.

The EHP Model Mainly Focuses on Services to Volunteer Clients or Their Families Who Understand the Disability and Seek Assistance

The model takes it for granted that the clients/families understand the disability and are willing participants in attempts to intervene. One of the most difficult challenges faced by adult educators is that many students will not accept the designation of having a learning disability because in their minds it is the same thing as mental retardation, and they refuse to accept input to the contrary. None of the categories of interventions mentioned by the authors are possible if students do not believe that they need them or would rather struggle along without them than accept that they have a learning disability. Despite the fact that there are accommodations available in many areas of their lives, they will forgo these accommodations rather than accept what they view as an unacceptable label.

Without knowledge of the label, however, they will never learn to self-advocate. Other students will accept their learning disability but only in a limited context. Once they get their GED, they lose all interest in learning how this disability will affect them in their other facets of their life. Even in preparing for the GED, they will complain about any attempt to present material on learning to learn. If it does not have a direct relationship to the GED, they view it as a waste of time. Counseling would be helpful in these situations, but again the question of funding arises. Who will pay the counselor?

In conclusion, while the authors' article contains some ideas that can be of use to adult educators, I believe that the differences in funding and training of the professional and the differences in those that they serve will make it

challenging to adopt this model even after it has been more thoroughly examined and researched.

THE ECOLOGY OF HUMAN PERFORMANCE MODEL

Response by Cheryl Keenan

Following is a summary of my thoughts on the Ecology of Human Performance Model as it pertains to teaching adults with disabilities.

The model was presented in a paradigm appropriate for use in the occupational therapy field. However, the model has potential for translation into a paradigm that would be useful to an adult educator who is teaching individuals with disabilities. The primary advantage is that, if adapted, it would give adult educators a systematic way to approach accommodations. In its translation, the model would support existing and emerging knowledge in the field of adult education in the following ways. The model would support teaching in the context of an adult's life and account for an accumulation of experience. It would address performance as a "range" and link it to context. It would demonstrate the problems associated with isolated approaches to teaching basic skills out of context and it would reinforce the application of skill or transfer of learning.

A preliminary attempt at translation of intervention types appropriate for adult education could be as follows:

1. **Establish or restore** the skill in context of the learner's life context.

It may be more appropriate to refer to the "establish or restore" intervention more generally as "skill development or skill enhancement." The connotation of the intervention as stated is one of a remedial nature and emphasizes a "deficit model" or a "medical model" of intervention which is sometimes inappropriate for adult skill development.

2. **Alter** the context.

This intervention actually assumes no intervention with the learner or the skill, but rather adapts the environment. It assumes living within the functional limitation of the disability, and while it is very appropriate for an occupational therapy paradigm, it may be inappropriate for the adult education paradigm. If there is no goal to enhance or develop a basic skill, the intervention is not appropriate for adult education services. Accordingly, this intervention should be dropped from the translation model.

3. **Adapt** the task to support the context in which it is taught and will be performed.

This intervention is probably the most appropriate for adult education as it describes systems by which a teacher can make true accommodations in instructional strategies and physical environment in which to teach skills enhancement.

4. **Prevent** failure.

While the occupational model presents the intervention as preventing "maladaptive performance," an adult education model could use this strategy in a pro-active manner. For example, if the program establishes a clear understanding of the types of activities it offers, the level of commitment needed, the way learners will participate in the evaluation of their own learning goals, etc., it will "prevent" a learner from dropping out because of unrealistic expectations. In effect, by establishing good communication processes up front, learners will be less likely to view their participation as "failures" and will be more likely to continue in the program.

5. **Create** a sound educational environment for all students.

This intervention emphasizes that if a program has good educational practices in place for all of its learners, learners who have disabilities will also benefit. Those practices must emphasize teaching in context and viewing performance in the context in which it will be applied.

In defining areas for future work, the article is consistent with several new directions in adult education. It discusses the need to develop assessment systems which link to intervention strategies, or in education terms, links assessment to curriculum and instruction. It defines the need to focus on which strategies have greater patient outcomes and on the need to focus on how certain contexts support performance in like environments or, in education terms, transferring learning.

ECOLOGY OF HUMAN PERFORMANCE MODEL: A POTENTIAL ADULT EDUCATION ADAPTATION

Establish or restore the skill in the learner's life context.

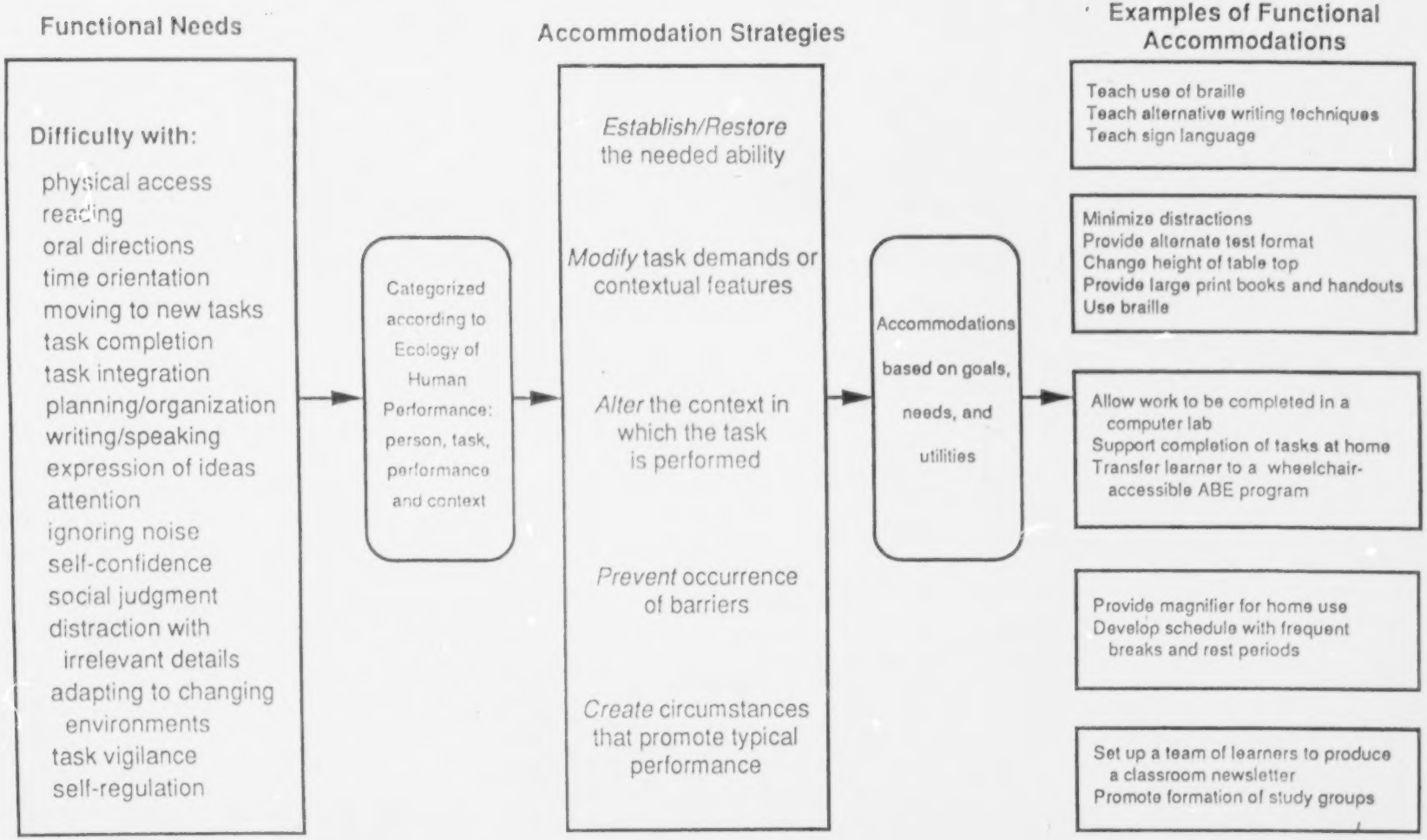
Alter the context.

Adapt the task to support the context in which it is taught and will be performed.

Prevent failure.

Create a sound educational environment for all students.

ACCOMMODATIONS MODEL:
Matching Functional Needs with Appropriate Accommodations Through the Ecology of Human Performance Framework


Functional Needs
Difficulty with:
physical access
reading
oral directions
time orientation
moving to new tasks
task completion
task integration
planning/organization
writing/speaking
expression of ideas
attention
ignoring noise
self-confidence
social judgment
distraction with irrelevant details
adapting to changing environments
task vigilance
self-regulation
Categorized according to Ecology of Human Performance: person, task, performance and context
Accommodation Strategies
Establish/Restore the needed ability
Modify task demands or contextual features
Alter the context in which the task is performed
Prevent occurrence of barriers
Create circumstances that promote typical performance
Accommodations based on goals, needs, and utilities
Examples of Functional Accommodations
Teach use of braille
Teach alternative writing techniques
Teach sign language
Minimize distractions
Provide alternate test format
Change height of table top
Provide large print books and handouts
Use braille
Allow work to be completed in a computer lab
Support completion of tasks at home
Transfer learner to a wheelchair-accessible ABE program
Provide magnifier for home use
Develop schedule with frequent breaks and rest periods
Set up a team of learners to produce a classroom newsletter
Promote formation of study groups

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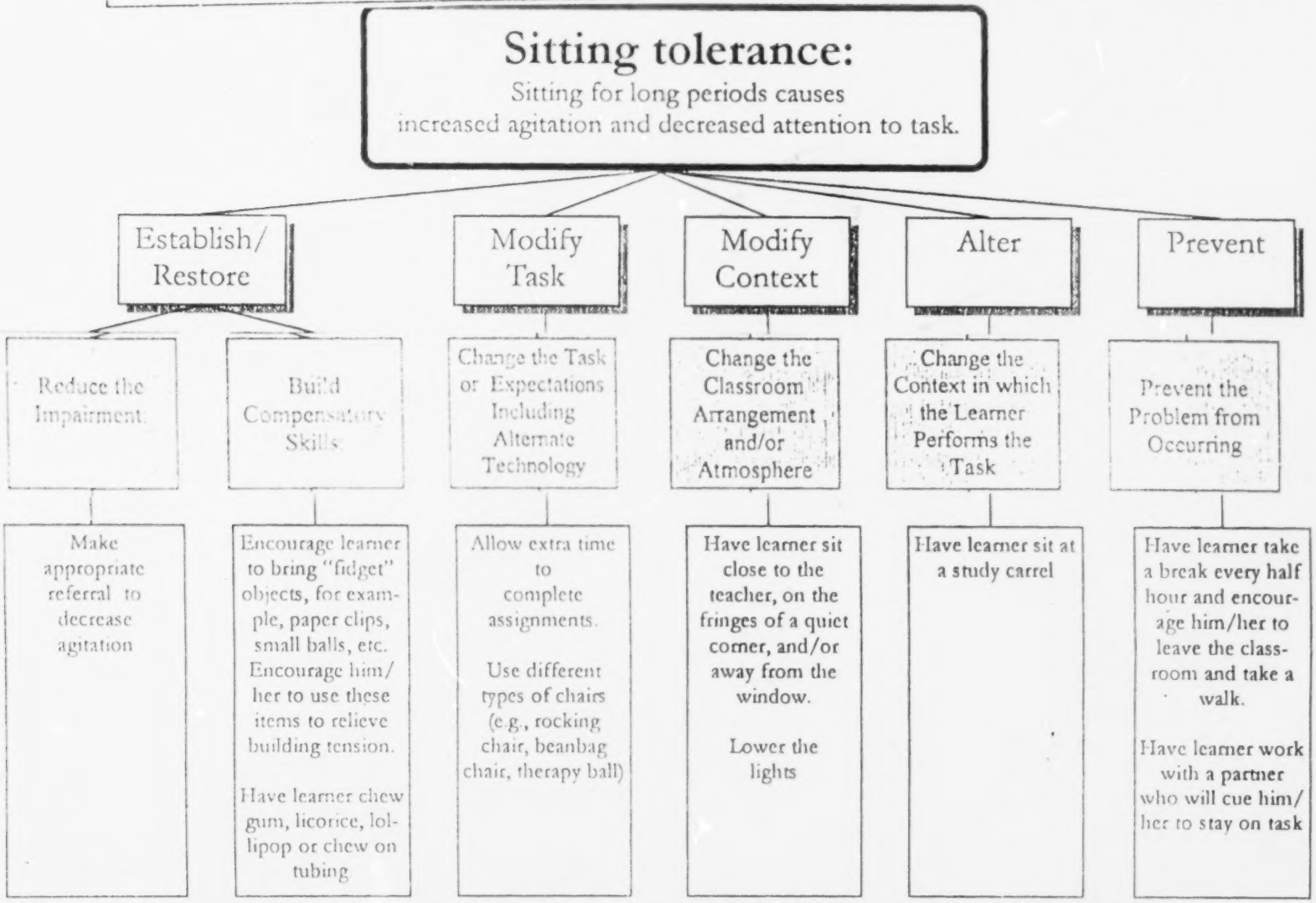
Case Example
Sam states that he has difficulty sitting still for extended periods of time. Sam tells you that he has recently received a poor performance rating at work where he sits and monitors video feedback for a security office at a shopping mall.


Sitting tolerance:
Sitting for long periods causes increased agitation and decreased attention to task.
Establish/ Restore
Modify Task
Modify Context
Alter
Prevent
Reduce the Impairment
Build Compensatory Skills
Change the Task or Expectations Including Alternate Technology
Change the Classroom Arrangement and/or Atmosphere
Change the Context in which the Learner Performs the Task
Prevent the Problem from Occurring
Make appropriate referral to decrease agitation
Encourage learner to bring "fidget" objects, for example, paper clips, small balls, etc. Encourage him/her to use these items to relieve building tension.
Have learner chew gum, licorice, lollipop or chew on tubing
Allow extra time to complete assignments.
Use different types of chairs (e.g., rocking chair, beanbag chair, therapy ball)
Have learner sit close to the teacher, on the fringes of a quiet corner, and/or away from the window.
Lower the lights
Have learner sit at a study carrel
Have learner take a break every half hour and encourage him/her to leave the classroom and take a walk.
Have learner work with a partner who will cue him/her to stay on task

Adapted from: Dunn, W., Brown, C., & McGuigan,A. (1994). The ecology of human performance: A framework for considering the effect of context. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 48, 595-607.

Adapted from: Smith R. (1993). Technology Part II: Adaptive Equipment and Technology. AOTA Self Study Series #8. Classroom Applications for School Based Practice. Charlotte Brasic-Royeen, ed. Rockville, MD.

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